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LABORATORY BULLETIN

MONTANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
HELENA, MONTANA



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RUBELLA HEMAGGLUTINATION-INHIBITION ON PRENATAL SERUM SPECIMENS

This year, in response to requests from physicians in Havre, we performed HAI tests on serum specimens sent to the laboratory from there for prenatal VDRL tests to determine status of immunity to German Measles. Although about 85 percent of this age-group have titers of antibody, it is advantageous to identify those not immune. First, the results provide a baseline value should the question of infection with Rubella virus arise later on; secondly, they provide guidance as to whether special precautions to avoid exposure to German Measles should be included in advice to the patient.

Physicians in other areas request this service also. Therefore, we are taking all prenatal specimens from the serology laboratory and testing them for Rubella HAI antibodies. Results will be reported to physicians separately. About 7,200 prenatal specimens are received each year and this is estimated to be 63 percent of prenatal VDRL's done in the State. Quite an additional load will fall upon the virology laboratory so efforts should be made to avoid unnecessary duplication.

HOW LONG SHOULD LABORATORY COPIES OF RESULTS OF CLINICAL LABORATORY TESTS BE KEPT?

Here is what Medicare Regulations say: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 20, Chapter III, Part 405.1316"(e) Standard; Laboratory Report and Record. - The laboratory report is sent promptly to the licensed physician or other authorized person who requested the test and a suitable record of each test result is preserved by the laboratory in accordance with the State's statutes of limitations." This was referred to our attorney for interpretation and he said there was no particular statute in Montana Codes which would apply. On the basis of the "usual and customary" rule we would recommend a period of 5 years. In statutes of limitation which pertain to immunity from prosecution, this is a time period frequently used. This recommendation does NOT apply to the following: pathologic anatomy, histopathology, cytology, EKG, or X-ray.

ASEPTIC MENINGITIS 1970

Numerous cases of aseptic meningitis of a clinical type usually associated with enterovirus infection have occurred this past season. The following viruses were identified: ECHO 3 (Havre), ECHO 6 (Wolf Point), ECHO 3 (Wolf Point), Coxsackie A9 (Missoula), ECHO-not typed (Billings). By referral from N. Dakota: Coxsackie A9 (3 isolates) and ECHO 9 (2 isolates). The specimen required for these studies is stool or rectal swab (with plenty of fecal material on it), taken during the first few days of illness and sent promptly to the laboratory.

OUR RECEIVING CLERK FREQUENTLY COMPLAINS ABOUT LEAKING STOOL CONTAINERS. PERHAPS THE CONTAINER WAS GIVEN TO THE PATIENT WHO GINGERLY PLACED THE SPECIMEN INSIDE AND JUST AS GINGERLY PUT THE LID ON AND IT WASN'T CHECKED FOR TIGHTNESS BEFORE SHIPPING.

